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VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE AND EMPLOYMENT COUNSELLING IN EGYPT

Vocational Guidance and Employment Counselling in Egypt

Vocational Guidance in a developing economy is an important instrument for the development, and mobilisation for better utilisation of human resources of the country. Therefore, V.G. has been one of the major concerns of the Egyptian Ministry of Manpower and Training. It aims for helping individuals to get the proper preparation for adult working life, and, the best utilisation possible of young people, when they reach the working age.

The Vocational Guidance and Employment Counselling assistance is provided at Manpower Offices to those who seek such assistance. It is intended to help people - young and adults - to choose and prepare for a role in life which would offer satisfaction in work and a reasonable chance of progress and personal happiness. Therefore, this service is furnished to the new entrants to the employment market, adult workers requiring counselling for readjustment in employment market, and school leavers and drop-outs.

To conduct this programme, by the Ministry of Manpower of Egypt: a General Department of Vocational Guidance and Vocational Information has been established in 1968 to be concerned with the planning, implimentation of policies and procedures of the programme, training of the staff, preparation of technical literature, developing tests, supervision, control and coordination at the national level.

The implementation of this programme has started with the establishment of six pilot V.G. units in Cairo and Alexandria Governments, and continued expansion throughout the country. Now, it covers the majority of urban governments with 45 V.G. local units, in addition to 14 regional units. It is planned to cover the whole country by the end of 1986.

The regional V.G. units at the level of the Governments are functioning to assist the Manpower Directorates in the administration of the V.G. programme in their respective Governments, areas.

At the local level of the Manpower office, the programme of V.G. is implemented by the specially trained officer (Vocational Guidance) under the administrative control of the manager of the Manpower office.

Broadly, the following functions are performed by the V.G. units at the Manpower Offices.

1. Provide Vocational Guidance and Employment Counselling to youth (boys and girls) and adults (men and women) individually as well as in groups.

2. Assist the youth in the placement of institutional or in plant training and apprenticeship (as regards the adults, it helps in securing re-training).

3. Follow up and review the progress of the guided youth and adults.

4. Arrange the collection and maintenance of up to date information in respect of educational programmes, training facilities, information of job opportunities and the requisits of educational and training qualifications prescribed to fill them, recruitment methods laid down by different employers, employment trends in general as well as by different industrial sectors of the economy, public and private, employment outlook and the future planned economic growth of the area/region.

5. Make suitable arrangements of dissemination of all the information collected and maintained to youth, adults, peoples, teachers, and parents.

Types of Vocational Guidance Services

Individual Guidance: It is provided to all those:

1. Who seek guidance on their initiative.
2. Who are sent for guidance by other officers of the Manpower Office, schools, vocational training institutions, and parents.
3. Those who come for renewal of registration.

Individual Guidance is given as soon as possible after the applicant asks for it, on the day of registration. The Vocational Guidance officer receives the applicant and examines his registration. card and his medical report. Then, he starts interviewing the client and administering the battery tests. The information obtained represents the necessary input to reach a decision through the discussion of every detail.

Group Guidance:

Group Guidance is conducted by the Vocational Guidance officer in places other than the manpower offices. He is required to visit schools and training institutions in the area. Talks and discussions on careers available take place, proper explanations are offered about job opportunities at present and future, information in respect of local, regional and national economic development scheme, the type of employment generated and its volume by time schedule; prospects of employment in these development projects; training and apprenticeship facilities available or likely to be developed in the area/country, educational courses; employment trends by different occupations and industry, etc., etc.

Instruments of Vocational Guidance

I. Personal interviews:

Individual Guidance consists of one or more interviews with the person seeking guidance or employment assistance. The Vocational Guidance officer discusses the occupational choices and careers suggested in relation to the guidance seekers level of intelligance, education, abilities and capacity to work, aptitudes: interests, personality traits, physical condition, family circumstances, etc., etc. In order to be effective, these interviews should essentially result in bringing about well

considered plans of vocational choices involving suitable job opportunities, training, apprenticeship, and the methods of securing these objectives. Therefore, the General Department of Vocational Guidance and Vocational Information gives great concern to the training of Vocational Guidance Officers on interviewing approaches and techniques. Although it is a prerequisit that the Vocational Guidance officers should have a university degree in Psychology, which of course guarantees the acquisition of basic interpersonal skills, they should go through the intensive training held by the department in subject of interview.

The major areas covered in such training programmes are:

1. Provide the new interviewers with the principles of measurement: give them intellectual grasp of the data-collecting function and a basis for evaluating interviewer behaviour.

2. Teaching them techniques of interviewing.

3. Provide opportunity for practice and evaluation by actually conducting interviews under controlled conditions.

4. Offer careful evaluation of interviews, especially related to vocational guidance assistance.

Testing:

In order to assess the vocational guidance seekers abilities and aptitudes, the General Department of vocational guidance and vocational information has developed a testing battery to be used by the vocational guidance officers in the manpower offices. A study was conducted in 1972 to develop that battery which has gone through the following steps:

First: a job analysis to identify the major job elements and specify the corresponding skills, knowledge,and other worker traits required by the job.

Second: Selection and construction of tests to assess the characteristics specified in the first step.

Third: administration of the tests on a representative sample of the target population.

Fourth: retesting the same sample for the purpose of calculating the tests reliability.

Fifth: correlating each test with appropriate criteria of job performance and choosing tests for the final battery.

Sixth: formulating norms appropriate to age groups, i.e., determining how scores on the choosen tests will be used in making operational decisions.

Because the target population is predominantly illiterates or semi-illiterates, it has been taken into consideration that the selected and constructed tests should be mainly performance tests which do not require reading and writing abilities. However, the battery has included paper and pencil tests, which require oral instructions and communication on the part of the examiner.

The final battery consisted of eleven tests which measure the following characteristices.

1. Intelligance
2. Hand and Eyes Coordination
3. Manual Dexterity
4. Fingers Dexterity
5. Hand Steadyness and Aiming
6. Mechanical Ability
7. Mental Alertness
8. Multi-Work Simultaneous Performance
9. Length Determination
10. Performance of Repeatative-Routin Work.
11. Tracing Ability.

Occupational and Employment Market Information

In the Manpower Offices, the most essential instruments of vocational guidance are the occupational and employment market information materials which provide definitions in the area, information of job opportunities and the trends of employment by industry and various occupations therein, details of vocational training courses, etc., etc. It is therefore the duty of the (vocational guidance) officer to collect all these information from its original and secondary sources, and file it systematically according to instructions given from time to time and endeavour to maintain it up to date as far as the local area is concerned. Information pertaining to areas beyond the Local Office administrative area, should be obtained through the regional office at the Government's level.

Career Pamphlets:

Guides to Careers are issued in the form of pamphlets by the General Department of vocational guidance and vocational information from time to time, in accordance with a planned programme which include consultations with the concerned departments of the Ministry of Manpower, the local and regional manpower offices, and other organizations related to Education, Training, Apprenticeship, Productivity, Economic Development Plans, Employers' and Workers' Organisations, etc., etc., on the choice of careers to be

covered in those series of pamphlets. Further, these pamphlets provide general information on the employment out-look or prospects, duties involved, training required, chances of advancement and promotion, working conditions, wages, recruitment methods, etc., etc.

Guides to Careers pamphlets are primarily intended for the benefit of the new entrants to the employment market and it is therefore essential for the vocational guidance officer to see that it is made easily accessible to all such persons.

Handbook on training facilities

The handbook on Training Facilities provides sufficient information for counselling and guidance on institutional and in-plant training facilities available in the country. Information in respect of different courses of study, apprenticeship and their duration, admission requirements, etc., etc., is provided pertaining to each important institutions and industry.

In addition to the above, the vocational guidance officer conducts the following activities in respect of the placement in training institutions and/or apprenticeship.

1. Maintain a stock of admission forms of various training and apprenticeship institutions and distribute them to the eligible youth.

2. Forward the applications for training courses or apprenticeship of those candidates who have received individual guidance with a recommendation if the applicant has been found suitable beyond doubt for the training and the apprenticeship.

3. Contact and pursue Heads of the training institutions and the employers with whom apprenticeship is sought to accept the guided applicants, provided the applicants are found suitable.

4. The vocational guidance officer is entitled to accept the invitation to become a member of the Selection Committee or for administering Selection tests whenever invited to do so in connection with the training or apprenticeship admissions.

Follow Up

- To assess the results of guidance, it is necessary to follow up the guided cases. For this purpose, the applicants given individual guidance are given the facilities to seek further assistance or guidance from the Manpower Office vocational guidance section whenever they feel the need for this. Therefore nothing precludes the guided applicant to come to the vocational guidance section for seeking advice and guidance assistance, as and when felt necessary, repeatedly.

- Care is exercised to see that the applicants Serial number as recorded and guidance code number is entered on the card in the specified columns on the card. This will facilitate tracing of the individual applicants card in the vocational guidance section.

- If considered desirable, the applicant may be provided with another card during the subsequent visits for further guidance purposes.

- Evaluation of the individual guidance programme is carried on by conducting ad hoc surveys, in accordance with the instructions which may be issued, from time to time, by the Director General, Vocational Guidance and Vocational Information Department.